

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 028944
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DRAFTED BY NEA/IAI:WBSMITHII:SKG
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S/S:RPERITO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 028944

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS SY LE IS

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: ISRAELI PROPOSAL

REF: STATE 27872

1. SUMMARY. ISRAEL HAS PROPOSED (TEXT IS BELOW) THAT FIRST-PHASE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR SUGGESTION IN REFTEL BE TO AYSHIYAH RATHER THAN JARMAQ, WHICH WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL IF LEBANESE FORCE EVENTUALLY SENT INTO NABITIYAH WILL BE GENUINELY LEBANESE, IF GOL WITHIN 24 HOURS AGREES TO THESE ARRANGEMENTS AND SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE IS PROVIDED, AND IF THE SECRETARY DURING HIS VISIT TO AREA DISCUSSES CONTINUATION OF SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. HABIB TOLD DINITZ HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONVEY

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ISRAELI SUGGESTION TO LEBANESE AND SYRIANS BUT COULD BY NO MEANS BE SURE OF HAVING REPLY WITHIN 24 HOURS. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR DINITZ FEBRUARY 8 PRESENTED TO UNDER SECRETARY HABIB FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER RABIN TO THE SECRETARY. BEGIN TEXT.

A. ISRAEL STANDS BY ITS DEMAND FOR WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIAN FORCES TO THE POSITIONS WHERE THEY WERE STATIONED BEFORE THEY MOVED SOUTH ON THE 23RD OF JANUARY.

B. IN LIGHT OF THE FORTHCOMING VISIT OF THE SECRETARY TO THE AREA AND IN VIEW OF THE READINESS FOR WITHDRAWAL THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE FOUND WITH SARKIS, WE ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL, AS DETAILED IN THE ORAL MESSAGE TRANSMITTED TO US ON THE 7TH OF FEBRUARY IN THE EVENING, AS A FIRST STEP IN THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL SYRIAN FORCES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE REQUEST THAT THIS FIRST STAGE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL THE SYRIAN FORCES WHICH ARE PRESENTLY SOUTH OF NABATIYEH WILL NOT BE TO JARMAQ BUT UP TO A LINE OF THE VILLAGE OF AYSHIYAH.

C. WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SURE THAT LEBANESE ELEMENTS REFERRED TO AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SYRIANS WILL INDEED BE GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC LEBANESE UNITS.

D. OUR ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PROPOSAL AS A FIRST STEP IS CONDITIONED ON OUR BEING INFORMED WITHIN 24 HOURS THAT THERE IS A LEBANESE AND SYRIAN READINESS TO IMPLEMENT IT AND THAT WE SHOULD BE INFORMED, WITHIN THIS TIME FRAMEWORK, WHAT IS THE TIMETABLE OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE SYRIAN FORCES.

E. THE CONTINUATION OF THE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AND ITS COMPLETION WILL BE DISCUSSED WITH THE SECRETARY WHEN HE VISITS US IN ISRAEL, AS WAS SUGGESTED IN HIS COMMUNICATION. END

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TEXT.

3. DINITZ ADDED FOLLOWING POINTS, WHICH HE SAID WAS ORAL MESSAGE FROM RABIN TO THE SECRETARY. FAVORABLE ISRAELI RESPONSE TO U.S. SUGGESTION WAS INFLUENCED TO LARGE EXTENT BY FACTOR OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO AREA AND ISRAELI DESIRE TO KEEP HIS TRIP UNDISTURBED. ISRAELI DECISION WAS TAKEN ON CONDITION THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD DEAL DURING HIS TRIP WITH PROBLEM OF SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AND WOULD ALSO DISCUSS OVERALL PROBLEM OF SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION. (IN PASSING DINITZ CONFIRMED WITH HABIB REFERENCE IN OUR MESSAGE TO SYRIAN "ELEMENTS" MEANT "ALL" SYRIAN FORCES IN KFAR TIBNIT.)

4. DINITZ SAID RABIN WANTED THE SECRETARY TO KNOW HE HAD EXPLAINED DECISION FEBRUARY 8 TO KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, NOTING ISRAELI DEMAND FOR COMPLETE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL REMAINED UNALTERED, NO OTHER ULTIMATE SOLUTION WOULD BE ACCEPTED, AND ISRAEL WAS GRATEFUL TO U.S. FOR ITS

UNDERSTANDING OF ISRAELI CONCERNS AND FOR PLAYING POSITIVE
ROLE UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY SYRIA.

5. DINITZ ADDED RABIN WANTED TO UNDERLINE TO THE SECRETARY
NEED FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL BE TO AYSHIYAH AND NOT JARMAQ,
FORMER BEING FOUR AND A HALF KM FARTHER NORTH. ISRAEL
ALSO WAS CONCERNED THAT REPLACEMENT FORCE BE GENUINELY
LEBANESE. ELEMENT OF TIME WAS IMPORTANT TO ISRAEL IN
ORDER TO ARRIVE AT DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION, DINITZ SAID, AND
THIS EXPLAINED NEED FOR REPLY TO BE RECEIVED WITHIN
APPROXIMATELY 24 HOURS.

6.
HABIB WONDERED HOW MUCH WOULD LEAK FROM KNESSET COMMITTEE,
POINTING OUT LEAKS WOULD COMPLICATE SITUATION. DINITZ
SAID COMMITTEE WAS LESS LEAKY THAN CABINET. HABIB ASSURED
DINITZ WE WOULD GO BACK TO LEBANESE AND SYRIANS WITH THIS.
WE HAD RECEIVED SOMETHING FROM THEM WHICH REINFORCED OUR
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FEELING THEY WOULD BE COOPERATIVE. BUT ISRAELI INSISTENCE
ON AYSHIYAH WOULD TAKE FORCE OFF LATERAL ROAD GOL WANTED
TO CONTROL. ALSO, 24-HOUR REQUIREMENT COULD BE PROBLEM.
EMBASSY BEIRUT MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET REACTION WITHIN SUCH
TIME FRAME, BUT PERHAPS NOT EMBASSY DAMASCUS. DINITZ
OPINED GOL RESPONSE ALONE MIGHT NOT SUFFICE AND SAID 24-
HOUR FRAME WAS SERIOUS.

7. HABIB AND ATHERTON EMPHASIZED OUR DIFFICULTIES IN
DEALING WITH GOL ON MATTER, WITH GOL QUESTIONING U.S.
READINESS TO PRESS ISRAELI DEMANDS, AND NOTED REAL CONCERN
IN GOL OVER DANGERS IN SITUATION FOR SARKIS' EFFORTS TO
UNIFY COUNTRY. HABIB ADDED THAT SARKIS MAY HAVE GENUINELY
MISCALCULATED THAT PLACEMENT OF THIS FORCE IN NABATIYAH
AREA WOULD NOT CAUSE PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL BECAUSE IT WAS
NORTH OF LITANI. DINITZ WAS DOUBTFUL SARKIS COULD HAVE
MISUNDERSTOOD AND SAID SYRIANS, FROM READING OPEN ISRAELI
COMMUNICATIONS, CLEARLY COULD NOT HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD.

8. HABIB SAID WE WOULD SEND MESSAGE PROMPTLY BUT NOTED
AGAIN THAT RESPONSE WITHIN 24 HOURS MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE.

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